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ABSTRACT

About one in five Americans moves each year, and often children find such moves emotionally difficult. This book is a guide to help adults assist young children (preschool-3) in understanding and dealing with the emotions that arise from moving to a new home. Intended for use with the picture book "Moving Is Hard," this resource provides suggestions and activities for communicating with children, recognizing their feelings, involving them in the move, and helping them adjust to their new home. Individual sections deal with talking about moving; responding to feelings; using the resource guide; saying goodbye to school, friends, and home; understanding denial, fear, withdrawal, loneliness, and anger; and methods for easing the transition to a new school, new friends, and a new home. A section on additional resources lists relevant books for adults and children, as well as the names and addresses of relevant support groups. (EAJ)

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KIDS HAVE FEELINGS, TOO

Fearon
Preschool-3

Helping Children Cope With Moving

A PRACTICAL RESOURCE GUIDE FOR **MOVING IS HARD**

By Joan Singleton Prestine

ED 403 022

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HELPING CHILDREN COPE WITH MOVING

A Practical Resource Guide for *Moving Is Hard*

By Joan Singleton Prestine

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Contents

Preface 6

About *Moving Is Hard* 7

Introduction 9

Talking About Moving 10

Responding to Feelings 12

Using the Resource Guide 14

Goodbye, School 16

Goodbye, Friends 18

Goodbye, Home 20

Understanding Denial 22

Understanding Fear 25

Understanding Withdrawal 28

Understanding Loneliness 31

Understanding Anger 34

New School 37

New Friends 40

New Home 42

Feeling Better 45

Afterthoughts 48

Additional Resources

- Books for Adults 50
- Books for Children 54
- Support Groups 57

Series Information 59

Index 63

Preface

About one in five Americans moves each year. But just because millions of Americans are mobile doesn't mean that moving is easy on children. Adults who are busy organizing a move sometimes do not pay enough attention to their children's mix of feelings.

Often children feel uprooted after leaving their neighborhood. They may exhibit indifference or detachment, especially if they are facing separation from tradition, family, friends, school, and their home. Their entire security system is shaken.

Some children grieve after moving. Their feeling is similar to the loss experienced after a death or divorce. The grieving process may interfere temporarily with their adjustment to their new home and can affect them emotionally and physically.

Helping Children Cope with Moving was written to help adults assist young children in finding positive responses to the feelings that result from moving to a new home. It is my hope that children will understand that regardless of the changes in their lives, their self-esteem and ability to cope will stay with them.

About *Moving Is Hard*

The *Moving Is Hard* picture book is designed to help children understand the feelings and responses they may experience when moving to a new home. Read the picture book and discuss the story with children before using the activities in this resource guide.

In the story a girl is very content in her home and neighborhood. She plays baseball and trades books with friends at the bus stop. She enjoys running with her dog, Buckles, through the fields and spying on her world from the top of a tree.

Her sense of security is upended when she has to move. She must leave her friends, routines, and favorite places. Her family moves to an apartment in a city, which seems to lack

everything that made her old house special. She feels sad, frustrated, and angry.

In the gradual process of adjusting, she joins a baseball league and gets to play first base. In the car pool to school, she trades books with new friends. She finds a park where she and Buckles can run with a friend. Best of all, she discovers a secret stairway to the top of her building, from which she can spy on the neighborhood. The girl begins to accept the changes in her life. Even though her new apartment is different from her old house, it's the same in the most important way: it's where she belongs.

Introduction

People move for many important reasons, such as a job transfer, a new marriage, divorce, or a wish to live in a healthier climate. Although the move impacts everyone in the family, children often respond differently to change than adults do. According to John C. Norcross, Ph.D., in his book *Changing for Good*, children from a fairly structured environment with established routines often view change as positive. They adjust well because their routines continue in their new homes. Children from homes with little structure and few routines often look at change negatively. They take longer to adjust to their new homes.

When children face a big change, they have a mix of feelings that can be upsetting. How children respond to those feelings affects everyone around them. Teachers, parents, and other adults need to observe changes in a child's behavior. For instance, children's school behavior may be on track, but their social behavior may be lacking because they don't have close friends.

Helping Children Cope with Moving is a guide to help adults assist children in understanding and dealing with the emotions that arise from moving. Used with the picture book *Moving Is Hard*, this resource provides suggestions and activities for communicating with children, recognizing their feelings, involving them in the move, and helping them adjust to their new home.

Talking About Moving

Children respond to a move based on their personalities, how far they move, and how often they move. First moves or infrequent moves often have a more dramatic effect than subsequent moves. But there are no guarantees that later moves won't create uprooted feelings.

Regardless of how many times children move, each move brings change. Each child copes differently. For children facing a move, talking about their thoughts and feelings is part of the adjustment process. The following activities may help children discuss moving and their feelings about it in a comfortable way.

What About Me? No One Asked If I Want to Move

Talking with your child about the move before it happens is crucial to making a smooth adjustment. Moving affects children directly—excluding them from the discussions can intensify their feelings of powerlessness. Talking one-on-one can make children feel more involved in the decision.

I Want to Talk

Before offering your opinions, listen carefully as children talk. Ask them how they feel and what ideas they have about making the move easier. Children don't necessarily expect you to cure their uncomfortable feelings, but they do want you to listen.

Tell Me How You Feel

Children may ask how you feel about moving. To build trust, share some of your concerns about the move. Answer their questions simply and briefly. Children often just want to know that you have a few uncomfortable feelings about moving, too.

The Secret Me

It's OK for children to have secrets, like a hide-out or a hidden stash of candy. But children's upset feelings should be expressed. Just because they don't talk about their

feelings doesn't mean they don't have any. Invite children to choose when and where they want to talk.

So Frustrated

Children often feel frustrated when they experience changes in their lives. Discuss how they have changed over the last year, guiding them to understand that changes are normal, healthy, and unavoidable. Remind children of the changes they have already faced in their lives, such as starting school. Remembering successes can give children confidence in handling the future. Then talk about the changes that may take place after the move. Together, figure out the pros and cons. Listen carefully and respect their opinions.

Responding to Feelings

Children who move often have a mix of feelings. Knowing how to respond to these feelings helps children adjust to the move more easily. By teaching children that their responses have natural consequences, children can learn to choose ways to deal with these emotions. Explain that for every action there is a feeling about that action. And when children have a feeling, they respond to it in some way. Actions evoke feelings and those feelings bring about responses. This cycle—action, feeling, response—is universal.

It is helpful for children to know that their positive and negative feelings are normal. The following list shows some typical feelings and responses that a child may experience during and after a move. Encourage children to add to the list.

Feeling	**Response**
shock or denial	won't talk about move
fear	refuses to try new things
withdrawal	wants to be alone
frustration	has short attention span
loneliness	doesn't have many friends
anger	yells, hits, kicks
contentment	accepts and adjusts to move

Face It

An effective way to help children understand the mixed feelings that accompany a move is to help them identify how they feel. Some children may wish to respond to their feelings through drawing. Encourage children to draw faces showing various expressions (happy, hopeful, frightened, frustrated, sad, lonely, and angry) on both sides of pieces of construction paper or paper plates. Make a hole at the top of each paper. Thread string or yarn through the holes. Children can then flip the papers over to show how they feel. Each child can share his or her feeling with others by hanging the face representing the emotion on the doorknob.

Moving Feelings

One way to help children overcome their upset feelings is to have them respond to prompts. Encourage children to complete the following sentences. Suggest that the sentences relate to the changes caused by the move. Example: *I feel happy because now I will have a place to ride my bike.* Then invite children to talk about their answers.

I will miss _____ because _____.

I feel scared because _____.

I feel frustrated because _____.

I feel sad because _____.

I feel lonely because _____.

I feel angry because _____.

I feel happy because _____.

I feel hopeful because _____.

I'm looking forward to _____ because _____.

I'm Listening

Listening to children without letting their uncomfortable feelings get you down can help them adjust to changes. Encourage children to discuss how they feel about the changes and what they want to do to feel better about the move. Let them know that you have confidence in their ability to make the move work. Your positive response reinforces the idea that children can be responsible for their feelings and how they respond to them.

Using this Resource Guide

Activities are excellent ways to encourage children to express their feelings. The practical, hands-on activities in this resource guide can help children understand their feelings. They can reassure children that it is normal to have a mix of feelings and responses. The following activities are not intended to address the needs of children who have severe emotional or adjustment problems related to a move. These children may need to receive special professional guidance.

Suggestions for Implementing the Activities

- Don't tell children how to feel or respond. Give basic directions, but allow children the freedom to create their own projects. Their projects will be more meaningful if children create them according to their visions in a loosely structured environment.
- Provide a play environment around which activities can be introduced. This environment encourages children to approach feelings and thoughts that might otherwise be too uncomfortable to deal with.
- Some children may choose to engage in one activity repeatedly and not to participate in any others. That's all right. An activity may be perfect for one child and not useful for another. Feel free to rotate activities to accommodate the needs of children in your care.
- The most important considerations are the thoughts and feelings that children experience while participating in a project. Feelings that children have about moving away from the people and things they care about are often reexperienced. Children may cry or show other physical signs of emotion. Affirm children's feelings and then help them put the feelings into words.
- If you have questions about the adjustment some children are making after a move, it is wise to save

examples of their work. Date the back of each activity so you can follow the chronological progression. You could also keep notes on verbal responses to share with a child's school or therapist.

The following activities are divided into sections that relate to some of the changes and feelings that children may experience, as depicted in the picture book *Moving Is Hard.* After listening to children's comments and questions and helping them express how they are feeling, choose activities that are appropriate for each child's emotional needs.

Goodbye, School

"Scott and Debbie and Jeff and I trade books at the bus stop."

These words from the picture book *Moving Is Hard* convey the rewarding friendships that children often develop with classmates.

Next to home, school is probably the most important place in a child's life. Before children adjust to a new school, they need to have closure at the old one. The following suggestions for the teacher and parent allow children to part on a positive note and can help children keep in touch after the move.

Goodbye Party at School

Suggest that the child who is moving bring cupcakes or another treat to school for a class party. During the party the child can share pictures of his or her new home and information about the new neighborhood. Invite classmates to ask questions.

Memory Book

At the goodbye party, classmates, teachers, and the principal can write messages on pieces of paper to the child who is moving. Some may wish to include their addresses and phone numbers. Take individual pictures of all the children. Later, help the child glue the pictures next to the messages and make covers out of construction paper. Protect the covers with clear self-adhesive paper. Assemble the book, make a hole through the top left corner, and hold it together with a metal key ring or yarn.

Staying in Touch

The child's old and new classes may wish to become sister classes. Students could begin by writing each other or communicating by E-mail. If the schools are nearby, the classes can plan a joint field trip to a park, the zoo, or a museum. If the classes are far away, they can still share information about field trips or other fun activities.

Remember Me

Children will appreciate a memory they can see, touch, and even wear. Suggest to children that they ask their teachers, coaches, teammates, classmates, and friends to sign their names with permanent markers on a large, light-colored T-shirt. To preserve the T-shirt, they can put it into a picture frame and hang it in their new room.

Goodbye, Friends

**"I play baseball with my neighborhood friends.
All my friends live here."**

These words from the picture book *Moving Is Hard* convey how happy the girl feels among her neighborhood friends.

Children may be saying goodbye to family members and close friends. The ages of the children can affect how they respond to the move. Younger children live more in the present and may not understand the idea of moving. Older children do understand. Telling children what changes to expect after they move, setting aside time to be with special people, and planning how to keep in contact with family and friends helps relieve stress and anxiety. The following activities provide some ways to say goodbye.

_T_ for Me, _T_ for You

Encourage the child to choose a T-shirt to trade with his or her closest friend. Wearing a T-shirt that belonged to a close friend can make a child feel more connected with the friend after moving and less lonely. Friends might also exchange stuffed animals.

I'll Be Back

Before the move, work with children to plan a return visit, especially if the new neighborhood is not within walking distance. Planning a return visit and marking it on a calendar alleviates children's fears that they will never see their neighborhood, school, or friends again.

Just Visiting

Before children return to their old neighborhood for a visit, help them understand that things will be different. Even though the neighborhood and their friends look the same, the children who have moved will be visitors. Help children create two lists— one of what they expect will be the same and one of what they think will be different. The lists may help children prepare for surprises and possible disappointments.

E-mail From Me to You

If your home computer has access to the Internet, children may find it gratifying to have their own electronic post-office box. Teach them how to send and receive E-mail so that they can keep in contact with family members and friends who also have E-mail accounts. Children may wish to print the messages and store them in a scrapbook.

Goodbye, Home

**"We've lived here for a long time. I like it here.
I climb tall trees and spy on my whole world."**

These words from the picture book *Moving Is Hard* convey the security that children often feel in their home environment.

The memories that children have of their neighborhood, house, and room affect how they feel about leaving them. If their lives were full of laughter, fun, and love, saying goodbye may be hard. Even if there were difficulties, such as sibling rivalry, it's what the child knows. Moving can be tantamount to leaving a close friend. But knowing that family members who helped create positive memories are

also moving may make the adjustment easier. The following activities can help children create closure as they leave their homes.

Lights, Camera, Action

Help children videotape or take photographs of their neighborhood and the inside and outside of their home. Remind them to include their bedroom, secret hide-out, or favorite room. They can also film where the family pets sleep and spend time. Tell children they can add to the project when they move to their new home.

Old House Scrapbook

As an alternative to the previous activity, recommend that children make a scrapbook of pictures of their home—before packing begins—and write a brief memory sparked by each picture. After or during the move, encourage them to think about the good times when the scrapbook is open. But when the scrapbook is put away, it's important to make new memories in their new home and neighborhood.

Packing Up

Allowing children to help with the move gives them control, lets them experience the reality of moving, and keeps them busy. Put several small moving boxes in the children's room. Discuss what could go in each box, such as clothes, toys, and books. Help them label the boxes. Depending on the ages of the children, they can pack their belongings alone or with your assistance.

Moving Write Along

While the movers load the truck, suggest that children write or sketch their observations about packing and unpacking, loading and unloading the van, and getting to the new house. Encourage them to ask the movers to autograph their story. Then have children make a cover and staple the pages together.

Understanding Denial

"But now we are moving. I don't want to move. I like this house and this neighborhood and I especially like my room."

These words from the picture book *Moving Is Hard* convey the feeling of denial that children often have when they find out they are moving.

Some children do not want to accept the fact that they are moving, so denial is a "safe haven" for them. They refuse to tell their friends they are leaving or to talk about the move with their family. It is difficult for them to help with any packing or preparatory activities. If their parents didn't inform the school, these children would relocate without a word.

Denial allows children to feel that there's a chance the problem will go away. The following activities may help children understand that the move will take place.

Toys on the Move

Although children want to share their feelings, they may not know how to identify or respond to them. Playing with puppets, stuffed animals, or dolls is a good way for children to respond to their feelings about the move and for you to observe what they are feeling. Ask children to pretend their family of stuffed animals is experiencing the same move as they are. These friends are safe and represent unconditional love. After sharing with toys, children may wish to talk about how they want to respond to their feelings.

My Move

For those children who won't accept that they are moving, read the picture book *Moving Is Hard.* Suggest that they write and illustrate a picture book of what they imagine their move will be like. Guide them to write about their activities, school, family, friends, and house. Encourage them to use the girl's story for ideas, but to write about their own feelings and what they'll miss. Explain that it's OK if their feelings are different than hers.

Farewell Drawing

Helping children become aware of how they feel makes it easier for them to choose how to respond. Some children may express themselves through art. Suggest they draw a picture of their family in the old house. Ask them what everyone is doing. If a family member is missing, ask where that person is and what he or she is doing. Then encourage them to draw a picture of their family in the new home. Discuss what everyone is doing. Then ask what they feel when they look at the two drawings next to each other.

Referrals, Please

Children may have an easier time accepting the move when they realize that they can continue their favorite activities. Whether children are perfecting their baseball

swing or their musical skills, consistency is important. With the children present, ask coaches or teachers for referrals in the new community. Including children in the plans lets them know how important their activities are and that they can continue them in their new neighborhood.

Understanding Fear

"Moving is hard. Our new house isn't a house. It's an apartment. And this neighborhood isn't a neighborhood. It's busy streets and tall buildings."

These words from the picture book *Moving Is Hard* convey the feeling of fear that children often have when they realize the differences between their old and new homes.

Children are not afraid of moving as much as they are afraid of the unknown. Most children have rumbling thoughts: *What if I'm the worst soccer player? What if I can't do the school work? What if there are no children in the neighborhood? What if no one likes me?* No one can

guarantee that their activities, school, neighborhood, friends, or house will be similar to or better than the old ones. The only guarantee is that their lives will change. The following activities can help children become less fearful about changes in their lives.

Draw It Out

Children who resist change should try to understand their fears. Have them draw pictures of what they are afraid might happen after the move. As they share the pictures with you, help them express what is the worst possible thing that could happen because of the move. Discuss what they could do about it and how they might accept the changes that are happening in their family.

Architects to Be

Encourage children to build out of snap-together blocks a model house or apartment similar to their new home. Discuss where furniture could go and together place the pieces in various rooms. Point out that after the move their family and most of their belongings will be in the new home, too. If they express a fear, help them decide how to overcome it. Then ask children to invent a story about where different family members are and what they're doing in each part of their new home.

Stormy Weather

When children move to a different part of the country, they may encounter unfamiliar weather that may scare them. At the library, check out children's books on seasons and weather-related storms. Share them with children. Knowing what the risks are, what to expect, and how to stay safe can help alleviate children's fears.

What's Really Important

Some children feel so secure in their environment that they're afraid to leave it. Explain that security, self-confidence, and identity don't come from a certain place. They come from within. Help them understand that even though they are changing their bedroom or classroom, their

family, values, and ability to make friends will stay with them. Encourage children to share how they can continue to do what is important to them.

Sleepless Nights

Occasionally children with no previous sleep troubles have trouble falling asleep in their new rooms. They may quiet down if someone lies down with them. Others feel better if a parent reads to them. It's usually just a matter of time before children overcome their fears and return to their former sleep patterns.

Sometimes in a new house, children are afraid to sleep alone in their bedrooms, or they awaken with nightmares. Some may want to climb into their parents' bed for a cuddle. Encourage children who won't sleep in their own beds to have a campout in their parents' room, sleeping in a sleeping bag inside a tent or on the floor.

Understanding Withdrawal

"There's no place to play baseball. I'll never use my mitt again!"

These words from the picture book *Moving Is Hard* convey the feelings of withdrawal and indifference that children sometimes exhibit after a move.

After a move some children find it easier to withdraw and appear indifferent to their new surroundings. They don't have the desire or energy to adjust to the move. They are not interested in playing their favorite sport, making new friends, putting their toys away, or decorating their room. The following activities can help children understand that withdrawing won't put them back into their old environment.

But I Feel Awful

Occasionally children say they don't have any energy or they're too tired to try a new activity. Some complain of stomachaches and nausea. The physical and emotional stress of moving can affect children. They need to get into the routine of eating right. Before the kitchen is fully functional, sugar may be easy to grab, but 20 minutes later, children will have no energy. Instead of sugar, have children refurbish their energy by eating healthy forms of carbohydrates, such as bread, pasta, fruits, or vegetables. Suggest that children choose their favorite healthy foods at the grocery store and help prepare snacks at home. Once their bodies stabilize, children probably won't use a lack of energy as an excuse for not wanting to participate in new activities.

A Fresh Start

To help understand why children seem distant after their move, help them list what they didn't do at their old school, house, or neighborhood that they wanted to do. Ask them to list what they would do if they went back for a visit. Then ask what they would like to do at their new school, house, or neighborhood. Compare lists to see if there are some new activities to try right away.

Sign Me Up

Resuming activities promptly can be one of the cornerstones to children's acceptance of their new environment. You can also consider the move an opportunity to widen children's horizons. Urge children to consider signing up for an activity that they've never pursued but feel comfortable trying.

Art Space

Sometimes children feel frustrated because they don't have enough to do in their new home. Everyone seems busy but them. Allow children to make a collage, shadowbox, stool, or even a table for their room. This project encourages creativity, gives them a sense of accomplishment, and can help them feel comfortable in their new home.

I'll Do That Tomorrow

Some children are procrastinators by nature. They put off making new friends, just as they put off making their beds. They like to do what feels good and tend to withdraw from what doesn't feel good. But after being nudged to get started, they usually finish. Together figure out what they want to do and by what date. Consider having them do one group activity, such as joining scouts, and one individual activity, such as playing with a new friend at recess. Have children draw themselves doing the activity and write when they will do it. Suggest they put the picture in a spot where they will see it often.

Dangling Carrot

Shy children are different from procrastinators. It's not that they don't want to fit into a new environment; it's just hard for them. During a quiet time, encourage children to choose activities that will help them join the school or neighborhood scene, anything from inviting a friend over to going to the park. Before they venture out, role-play with them different things they could talk about and how they might approach other children. Let them know that you'll reward their effort with a gold star, a hug, or whatever seems appropriate for the child.

Understanding Loneliness

"And I don't have any friends. I'll never trade books again!"

These words from the picture book *Moving Is Hard* convey the feeling of loneliness that children sometimes have following a move.

Initially some children adjust well, only to suffer a setback. They are stimulated by the hustle and hassle of moving. But after their lives settle down, they become lonely. They may begin to find fault with everything about their new school or home, especially people they meet.

Because moving is so common, it's easy to think children are doing fine when they actually need support. In *A Nation of Strangers*, author Vance Packard suggests that children sometimes feel unattached, which can have physical and emotional effects. Disrupting a child's familiar routines, friendships, and environment often leads to a deep loneliness. The following activities can help children overcome their lonely and sad feelings.

But I'm Shy

Take children's shyness seriously. Ask them how they feel when they are with children they don't know. Some children feel nauseated or faint; others have pounding hearts or sweaty hands. Try role-playing with shy children. Discuss what they could say to new friends. Encourage them to smile and make eye contact. Suggest they watch how other children interact with each other and maybe try some of their techniques.

Music to My Ears

Sometimes children can overcome sad or lonely feelings through music. Ask children to put on their favorite tunes. Notice how changing tempos and volumes affect their mood. A lower volume might calm anxious children and remind them of secure times in their old home. Upbeat, lively music may pick up their spirits. Show them how their bodies can be a variety of musical instruments. They can create their own music by whistling, singing, clapping, stomping their feet, snapping their fingers, or slapping their thighs.

Seven Ways to Beat Loneliness

Have children write or dictate to you seven ways to beat loneliness. If children need help, suggest these ideas: reading, practicing a musical instrument, calling a friend, planning a family outing, helping a grown-up cook, playing with a pet, or doing a favor for someone special. Ask them to pick their top three ideas to start on. Remind them that doing things alone doesn't mean they have to feel lonely.

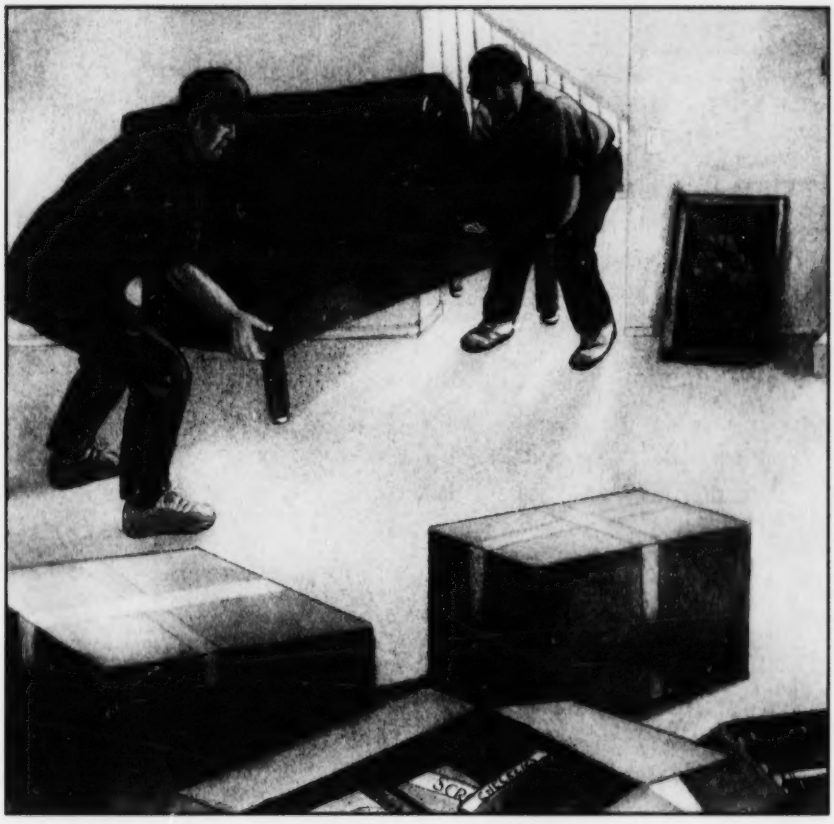
Be the First

Explain to children that if they're feeling lonely, it's OK for them to be the first to say hello, ask someone to join them for lunch, or invite a new friend over to play. Children who are new to a school or neighborhood often feel they need to wait for the other children to approach them.

Feeling Blue

Explain to children that their unhappy or lonely feelings won't take them back to their old school or home. Their feelings are normal, and in time they should feel happy again. Have children write or dictate the five best and five worst things about their old home and school. Then have them do the same for their new home and school. Discuss how they can choose to focus on the happier times. Children are comforted by knowing that you care about their feelings.

Understanding Anger



"Even though I didn't want to leave my room and my friends and my neighborhood, we moved anyway."

These words from the picture book *Moving Is Hard* convey the angry feelings that children often have after a move.

Children sometimes direct angry feelings toward other people. Parents are often the target because they caused the huge change in their children's lives. Children's anger may also flare toward friends, teachers, and siblings. Anger may take different forms: acting out at school, sibling rivalry, even temper tantrums. Focus on one behavior at a time to help children over the hurdle. The following activities can help

children channel their angry feelings without hurting others or themselves.

Chalk It Up

Children often find it easier to express themselves through art than through other means. If there is a cement area in the back or out of public view, give children outdoor chalk and ask them to draw a picture of what is making them angry. Talk with them about how much has changed and what is going on with their activities at school, in the neighborhood, with family, and with friends. Listen for insights into how the children are adjusting to their new school and home. After children have drawn and shared their thoughts, ask if they would feel better if they used a hose to wash away their angry feelings as they wash away the chalk.

Away We Go

Try giving angry children something constructive to do, such as planning a family outing. Together, check local newspapers for announcements of what is happening in the area. Going on an outing each week to a museum, park, movie theater, or bowling alley helps the whole family become acquainted with the area and may divert children's angry feelings about the changes in their lives.

Nature Connection

Walking barefoot in the grass or smelling a flower fills a need that most have to connect with the great outdoors. If children appear easily distracted, irritable, stressed, or angry, a walk outside can help them feel more peaceful, healthy, and safe. If possible, accompany them to a nearby park, recreation area, or plant nursery so they can experience nature.

Run, Run, Run

Help children understand that, although it's important to talk about things that bother them, physical activity such as running is a temporary way to dispel angry feelings. Suggest they find a safe place to run with an adult. A local park, stadium, beach, trail, or route to a friend's house are good places to run.

Pounding Angry

It is not uncommon for children to hit when they are angry. Remind children that even though it's OK to feel angry, it is never OK to hit another person or a pet when they are feeling this way. Encourage children to verbalize their anger and to choose something appropriate to hit. A small pillow or bag stuffed with newspapers are good alternatives.

Argue Fairly

Learning to vent anger without harming others or themselves is an important skill that children must learn. Make a poster to remind children of the rules for "fighting fair:"

- Choose *one* thing to argue about.
- Argue about that one thing.
- Talk, don't yell.
- Talk, don't hit or kick.
- Say "I'm sorry" if you know you're wrong.
- Listen to the other person.
- Don't name-call or say hurtful things.

New School

**"I car pool to school with Tonya and José.
We're friends and we trade books in the car."**

These words from the picture book *Moving Is Hard* convey the security that children feel when they adjust to a new school.

Getting an education is probably the most important job of children's lives. Their experiences at school help lay the foundation for what they will do as adults. Yet children have little input in the school they attend, where it's located, what they learn, or who their teacher is.

Children can choose how hard they will try to learn, how they will behave in school, and how they will respond to other students. The decisions that children make about school will affect them throughout life. Teachers can use the following activities to help new students adjust to school quickly, so that they can get on with the business of learning.

Memory Book

Suggest that new students bring a memory book from their last school or a few pictures to share with the class. Invite them to share something about their former home, neighborhood, school, and hobbies. Direct members of the class to share something about their hobbies, favorite sports, or after-school activities.

Tell Me How

New students need to understand how the classroom operates. Children who are quiet and don't ask questions risk getting lost in the shuffle. Children who act up in class when they don't understand call attention to themselves; they are usually set straight immediately. Encourage children to ask questions, draw a picture, or write a note if they don't understand a procedure. Help new students realize that the teacher does care and will take time to make them feel comfortable.

Map It Out

Another way to include new students is to have everyone share a little about themselves. Instruct students to identify on a map where they were born. Then have them point to the different states or provinces where they have lived. With the class, count and graph how many children have moved, the number of times they moved, and the number of states or provinces in which children have lived. Some children may use a world map to show other countries where they once lived. Then invite volunteers to take turns telling a story about moving.

Getting Around

This activity can be done at school or as a take-home activity to be completed with an older family member. Spread out an area map of the new neighborhood. If the move was across town, make an X at the location of the old house and circle the location of the new house. Draw the route between the two houses. With the child's input, mark the route from the new house to the school, friends' homes, the library, and other important destinations. Young children may want to use their toy cars to travel along the routes.

Pen Pals

Some children may wish to become pen pals with children from the new student's former class. Depending on the age and grade of the students, they could write, dictate, or E-mail their letters. Suggest that children share what books they like, what they're learning in their favorite class, or what pets they have.

New Friends

"I even found a park. Buckles and I can run and run."

This picture from the picture book *Moving Is Hard* conveys the enthusiasm that children feel as they make new friends after a move.

It takes time to make a good friend. Shortly after settling down, encourage children to contact family and friends from the old neighborhood, even if it's by phone or by postcard. The security of touching base with family and friends often gives children the confidence to try to make new friends. You may need to point out that oftentimes children who are

new to the neighborhood or school have to make the first gesture. Local children don't necessarily mean to snub new children. They just might not be looking to make new friends. Encourage them to reach out to potential friends through the following activities.

Campout

Once the family is settled, encourage children to invite friends for a sleepover. Suggest that they plan a campout in their backyard, living room, or bedroom. They may wish to have a planning meeting to decide on the date, food, sleeping quarters, and games.

Local News

To start building memories of their new home, suggest that older children cut out the masthead of a local newspaper. Help them glue it to plain piece of paper. With their new friends, have them write or dictate news about their neighborhood, school, and other activities. Encourage them to add drawings or photos. Then make copies to distribute.

Backyard Fair

Depending on the ages of your children, they may wish to organize a backyard fair with their friends. Involving children in the neighborhood can help them feel like they belong. Work with children to choose a worthy cause for which they would like to raise money. Help them design a flyer telling the fair's purpose, the time and place, some of the games, and the cost of the tickets.

Assist children in planning games, such as knocking cans over with a ball, potato-sack races, or obstacle courses. Children could also offer crafts and sell popcorn, lemonade, and hot dogs. Invite the whole neighborhood.

New Home

"And my new room is even better than my old one!"

These words from the picture book *Moving Is Hard* convey the satisfaction that children usually feel as they adjust to their new homes.

Settling into a new home is more than unloading the moving van and putting the furniture in place. It takes time to become familiar with a place: finding shortcuts to the store, recognizing cracks in the sidewalk, and memorizing the view out a bedroom window. Most children go through an adjustment period regardless of where they move. The following activities can help children feel comfortable after the boxes are unpacked.

Tooling Up

Invite children to keep you company while you complete home repairs. Depending on the task, they may even be able to help. Once you review safety rules, provide children with a hammer, screwdriver, or pair of pliers. They can use wood scraps to master the simple skills of hammering, screwing, and unscrewing. While working together, ask children what they would like to do to make their new surroundings feel more like a home.

Let's Paint

Organizing a child's room is very important. It's where children store their favorite possessions and where they feel secure. Some children may feel cozier if their new room is like their old room. Others may wish to decorate their room using this creative twist: Let children choose between two colors to paint the walls in their room. They can then choose a contrasting color with which to make handprints and footprints on one wall of the bedroom. As children grow, they can add more prints or other patterns.

Have Plants, Will Move

Let children take cuttings from plants at the old house to plant at the new house. This is a special project because the cuttings represent part of their old yard that moved with them. For the planting to be a success, make sure you know which plants grow from cuttings and what the plants need to survive. If the new home doesn't have a yard, help children plant the cuttings in pots.

Welcome Home

Many cultures have customs and traditions to help new families set roots in their houses. Some Jewish families clean their kitchens in a special way to make their kitchens kosher. A Filipino family may ask a Catholic priest to bless each room. Everyone feels a sense of safety and belonging from taking part in the blessing. Some Russian Jewish families

hang *mezuzot* at the door to greet guests and then offer them bread and salt as they enter. Thai families often place a shrine in the home.

Housewarming parties are an American tradition. They are held to welcome a new member of the family—in this case, the new house or apartment. Include children in the planning of the party. Tell them they should invite their friends and think of fun activities for young people to do.

Feeling Better

"The best thing I found was a secret staircase that leads to the roof of my apartment building! I can spy on my whole world!"

These words from the picture book *Moving Is Hard* convey the contentment that children feel as they become comfortable after a move.

Resuming mealtimes, finding possessions, and setting aside special time to talk or read helps children get settled. Some begin to accept change when they start having memorable experiences in their new homes. The following activities can help children create or record new memories.

Take One

Suggest that children shoot a video to help them get acquainted with their neighborhood. You or older siblings can assist very young children in this project. If there is no camcorder available, encourage children to take photographs or draw what they see. Shooting a video or taking photographs gets children out in the neighborhood where they begin to see their new environment through different eyes. Remind them that their new house or apartment is part of the neighborhood. Be sure they include both the inside and outside of their new home. Children may also wish to include new friends, sports, and of course, family. When they finish their project, help them send it to friends in old neighborhood. Ask the recipients to add new happenings from the old neighborhood and send the scrapbook or video back. The children can send the project back and forth.

Scavenger Hunt

Put together a scavenger hunt for the child or children who have moved. Invite a couple of new friends to join in. You will want to accompany very young children as they scour the neighborhood in search of such things as a menu from the Chinese take-out restaurant or an interesting rock from the school bus stop. You may wish to assist children in mapping the route they take to find all the things on the list. Be sure the scavenger hunt results in a wide-ranging exploration of the new neighborhood. Use the car or public transportation if necessary.

"Even though moving is hard, I like it here. In my new apartment house. In my new neighborhood."

These words from the picture book *Moving Is Hard* convey the sense of positive acceptance that eventually occurs in most children. Although they may still refer to this home as new, it has become—most importantly—home.

Family Calendar

After a move some children let others run their lives, and other children do not find much to do. In either case, children can take responsibility for their lives by helping create a family calendar. Each family member should record

his or her activities on it. The calendar is also a good way to notice scheduling conflicts or problems with over-scheduling. Be sure to plan some special family activities on the calendar and at least one activity with a new friend.

Taking Pride

Help children take pride in the areas of their lives that are working well. Moving and settling in can be trying, even if everything is going well. When the blues take over, sit with children and have them write, discuss, or draw all that they have accomplished or done in the last few days. Ask them to discuss the good feelings and what they were doing at the time. Talk about what they want to do to feel better.

Afterthoughts

Children who move experience change. Although they may appear to be fine, you should check with them to be sure. There are many areas of children's lives that a move may affect, such as the following:

- schoolwork
- teacher relationships
- neighborhood gatherings
- friends
- home life
- afterschool activities

Since reaction to change may produce strong feelings, it is common for children who move to experience some of the following feelings:

- denial
- fear
- withdrawal
- frustration
- sadness
- loneliness
- anger
- hope

Children need to express and respond to their feelings. Give them the opportunity to respond without being judged. Remember, for every action such as moving, there is a feeling. And for every feeling there is a response. Talking, writing, dictating, singing, or drawing are examples of constructive responses. Sometimes gentle prodding is helpful in getting children to respond to their feelings. Some suggested questions for a parent to ask a child follow. Let the child choose how to respond. Try not to interrupt the child while he or she is talking.

- What is different about your new school?
- What do you do during recess and lunch?
- What would you like to do after school?
- What new activity do you want to try?
- What is the best thing about your new neighborhood? the worst?
- Tell me about your new friends.
- How do you feel about not seeing your old friends?
- What do you like about your new home?
- Is there something about your new room that you want to change?
- What makes you feel angry?
- What makes you feel sad?
- When do you feel frustrated?
- What is your biggest fear?
- When do you feel lonely?
- What do you dream about?
- What would you like to change?

Books for Adults

Arent, Ruth D. *Stress and Your Child.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1984.

A guide to symptoms, strategies, and benefits of recognizing stress early.

Atlas, Stephen L. *The Official Parents Without Partners Sourcebook.* Philadelphia: Running Press, 1984.

This manual offers practical advice and personal experiences from single parents on a range of topics, including finances, decision-making, discipline, communication, custody issues, and special needs.

Brazelton, T. Berry, M.D. *Working and Caring.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1985.

Here is sensible and comforting advice for the working parent from a well-known pediatrician and child development expert. Dr. Brazelton balances his empathy for the parent with his concern for the child's well-being.

Elkind, David, Ph.D. *The Hurried Child: Growing Up Too Fast Too Soon.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1981.

Dr. Elkind discusses how early misinformation can cause permanent damage to a child's self-esteem and subsequent attitude toward learning.

Hart, Archibald D., Ph.D. *Stress and Your Child.* Dallas: Word, 1992.

A practical book packed with up-to-date information and down-to-earth guidance (including nine "stress tests" and two work sheets) to understand stress, pinpoint stress points, help handle stress, and more.

Kalter, Neil, Ph.D. *Growing Up With Divorce: Helping Your Child Avoid Immediate and Later Emotional Problems.* New York: Free Press/Macmillan, 1989.

Presents a clear, compassionate, developmental approach to protecting children from the emotional fallout of divorce. The author provides invaluable guidance that helps parents and children cope with the problems specific to the situation.

Medeinos, Donald. *Children Under Stress.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1983.

A sensible guide to help with the everyday stresses of childhood.

Neifert, Marianne, M.D. *Dr. Mom's Parenting Guide.* New York: Dutton, 1991.

This guide is filled with practical wisdom and a positive, realistic philosophy of parenting drawn from the author's experience as a pediatrician and mother of five. She covers

parenting from the exciting days of a newborn to the stormy seas of adolescence.

Saunders, Antoinette. *Stress-Proof Your Child.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985.

A loving parent's guide to help children handle stress.

Schaefer, Charles E., Ph.D. *How to Talk to Children About Really Important Things.* New York: Harper & Row, 1984.

This book provides guidelines, strategies, and tips on how to talk with children and how to be an approachable parent. Schaefer stresses the importance of listening to and acknowledging the child's viewpoint.

Siegel-Gorelick, Bryna, Ph.D. *The Working Parents' Guide to Child Care.* Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1983.

Solid information on the various options for child care and guidance on deciding which choice is best for your child. Reflects practical advice on issues such as interviewing, contracts, child development, and attachment concerns.

Smith, Dian G. *A Parents' Guide to Raising Kids in a Changing World: Preschool Through Teen Years.* New York: Prentice-Hall Press, 1991.

Includes constructive information and guidelines for what children need to learn about themselves and the world around them if they are to realize their potential.

Thomas Nelson Publishers. *The Family Matters Handbook.* Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1994.

Thirty-one doctors and counselors collaborate in this comprehensive how-to guide for helping parents build a secure, nurturing family atmosphere that grows strong, responsible children.

Weiss, Robert S., Ph.D. *Going It Alone: The Family Life and Social Situation of the Single Parent.* New York: Basic Books, 1981.

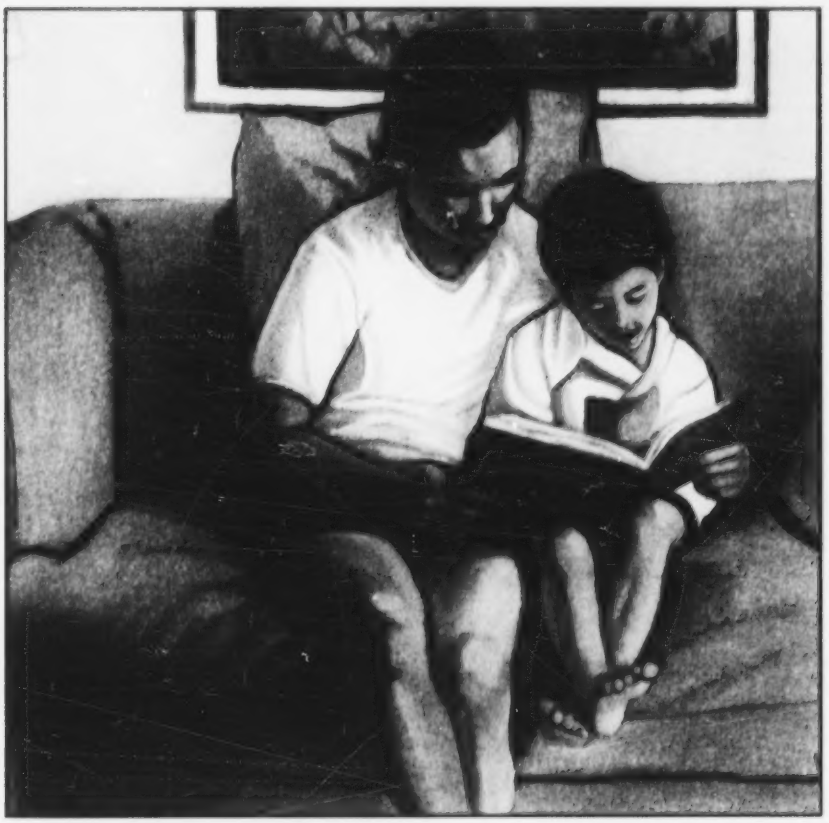
Sociologist Weiss discusses the life of a single parent. In their own words, single parents relate the everyday problems of raising children, coping mechanisms, and how they feel.

Young, Bettie. *Stress and Your Child.* New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1985.

A guide to helping children cope with the strains and pressures of life.

Books for Children

Good children's books are excellent for stimulating conversation about feelings and emotions. Children, regardless of age, will usually respond by listening, thinking, imagining, and then expressing their thoughts. Reading a book about a similar experience that a child is facing can help children work through and perhaps resolve their feelings. Reading helps children realize that they are not alone.



The following is an annotated bibliography of some fiction and nonfiction literature dealing with emotions that are appropriate for preschool to third-grade children. Choose the books that best suit the needs of the children in your care.

Aliki. *Friends Together Again.* New York: Greenwillow Books, 1995.

When Robert's best friend, Peter, comes back to visit, the friends experience a range of emotions.

Asch, Frank. *Goodbye House.* New York: Prentice-Hall, 1986.

Just before moving to a new home, Little Bear says goodbye to his favorite places in and around his old house.

Hest, Amy. *The Best-Ever Good-Bye Party.* Illustrated by DyAnne DiSalvo Ryan. New York: Morrow Junior Books, 1989.

Jason and Jessica are upset that Jason is moving, so Jessica throws a party to make the friends feel better.

Hickman, Martha Whitmore. *My Friend William Moved Away.* Illustrated by Bill Myers. Nashville: Abingdon, 1979.

Jimmy is very sad when his best friend William moves away. Then Jimmy meets a new friend near William's old house.

O'Donnell, Elizabeth. *Maggie Doesn't Want to Move.* New York: Four Winds Press, 1987.

Simon expresses his sad feelings about moving by crediting them to Maggie, his toddler sister.

Stevenson, James. *No Friends.* New York: Greenwillow Books, 1986.

Worried they won't make friends in their new neighborhood, Mary Ann and Louis listen to Grandpa reminisce about the friends he made when he moved.

Tobias, Tobi. *Moving Day.* Illustrated by William Pene Du Bois. New York: Knopf, 1976.

A child says goodbye to familiar friends and places and hello to new friends and places, creating a mix of thoughts and feelings.

57

Viorst, Judith. *Alexander, Who's Not (Do you hear me? I mean it!) Going to Move*. New York: Atheneum Books, 1995.

Alexander refuses to move away if it means having to leave his favorite friends and special places.

Waber, Bernard, *Ira Says Goodbye*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988.

Ira's best friend, Reggie, is moving away. Ira feels better when he makes plans to spend the weekend at Reggie's new home.

Watson, Wendy. *Moving*. New York: Crowell, 1978.

When Mom and Dad make plans to move to a new house, Muffin decides to remain in the old one.

Support Groups

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America
230 North 13th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 567-7000

With the help of adult mentors, this organization provides preventive programs to youth from single-parent families.

Boy Scouts of America
P.O. Box 152079
Irving, TX 75015-2079
(214) 580-2000

Boy Scouting is supported by adult volunteers who help instill values in boys and help them achieve their goals.

Child Care Action Campaign (CCAC)
330 Seventh Avenue, 18th Floor
New York, NY 10001
(212) 239-0138

The goal of this organization is to establish a national system of quality, affordable child care. It publishes guides that summarize important family issues.

Girl Scouts of the United States of America
830 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10022
(800) 223-0624

In partnership with adult volunteers, Girl Scouting offers girls a chance to develop their potential, make friends, and become an important part of their community.

Parents Without Partners, Inc.
8807 Colesville Road
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(800) 638-8078

This organization offers services to single parents and their children to aid in crisis intervention and education.

Single Mothers by Choice
P.O. Box 1642, Gracie Square Station
New York, NY 10028
(212) 988-0993

This group provides information and moral support for women who have chosen or are considering single motherhood.

Stepfamily Foundation, Inc.
333 West End Avenue
New York, NY 10023
(212) 877-3244

This group provides information, conducts seminars, and creates awareness of problems in step-relationships.

YMCA of the United States of America
101 North Wacker Drive
Chicago, IL 60606
(312) 977-0031

The YMCA offers a variety of programs for youths and adults to help build healthy minds and bodies.

Kids Have Feelings, Too Series

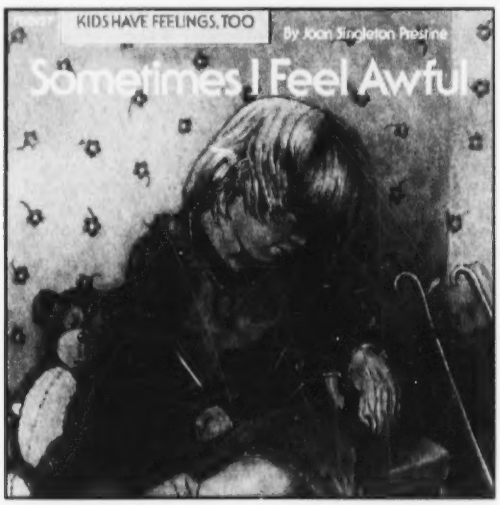
written by Joan Singleton Prestine
illustrated by Virginia Kylberg

The **Kids Have Feelings, Too** series was created to help parents, teachers, and caregivers deal constructively with the feelings children have as a result of traumatic events in their lives, such as death and divorce, or of simply growing up, such as learning to share. Each **Kids Have Feelings, Too** package includes a picture book to share with children and a resource guide full of activities and practical suggestions for helping children respond positively to their feelings.

In the *Someone Special Died* picture book, a young girl learns how to cope with the death of a loved one. Her feelings range from denial to anger to bargaining to sadness before she makes a scrapbook and accepts the death. She realizes that her loved one won't come back, but that she'll always have her happy memories. Winner of the 1994 Parents' Choice Parenting Shelf Award.

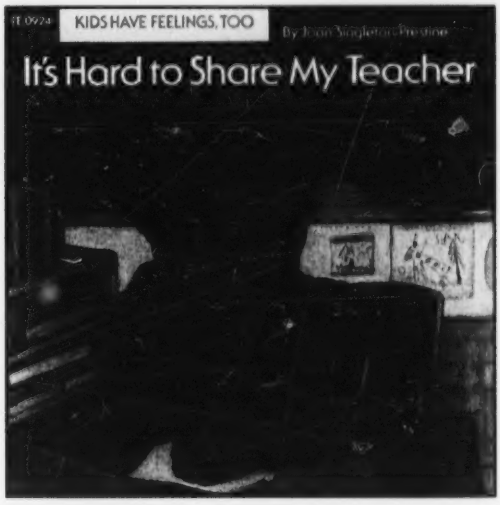
61

The accompanying resource guide, *Helping Children Cope with Death*, is designed to help adults assist children through the uncomfortable feelings that children can have after the death of someone that they love. Without telling children how to feel or respond, 61 activities provide the information necessary for adults to feel confident helping children help themselves through the grieving process. Winner of the 1994 Parents' Choice Parenting Shelf Award.



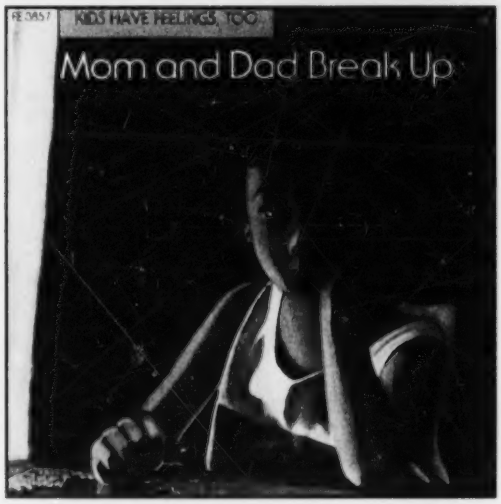
In the *Sometimes I Feel Awful* picture book, a little girl begins her day feeling happy. Through a series of actions, she experiences a variety of feelings and responds to these emotions in many ways.

The accompanying resource guide, *Helping Children Understand Their Feelings*, provides practical suggestions and activities for communicating with children, recognizing their emotions, and helping children learn to respond in a constructive, positive way to the 14 emotions presented in the picture book *Sometimes I Feel Awful*.



In the *It's Hard to Share My Teacher* picture book, Josh discovers it's easier to share things than it is to share his teacher. Josh finally realizes he has to share everything in school, even his teacher.

Helping Children Share Their Teacher provides 77 practical activities for adults to help children gradually learn how to share toys, school supplies, feelings, and eventually their teacher.



In the *Mom and Dad Break Up* picture book, a little boy experiences denial, guilt, and sadness because his mother and father are not going to live together anymore. Eventually he learns to accept the divorce. Most importantly, he realizes that Mom and Dad both love him.

Helping Children Understand Divorce is a guide to help adults assist children in understanding and responding to feelings that arise during a divorce. It provides 66 activities for communicating with children, recognizing their feelings, and helping them cope constructively with the changes in their family. Winner of the 1997 Directors' Choice Award.

Index

Acceptance (Feeling Better)
activities, 45–47
Anger
activities, 34–36
Art, <12>, <23>, <26>, <29>, <35>, <43>
Bedroom, 21, 43
Books, Adult (Additional Resources), 50–53
Books, Children, 54–56
Communication, 10–11, 13
Denial
activities, 22–24
Family, <26>, 27, 35, 43, 46
Fear
activities, 25–27
Feelings
acceptance, 45–47
anger, 34–36
denial, 22–24
fear, 25–27
loneliness, 31–33
withdrawal, 28–30
Friends
activities, 16, 18–19, 30, <32>, 40–41
Health, 29
Home
activities, 20–21, 42–44
Kids Have Feelings, Too Series, 59–62
Loneliness
activities, 31–33
Moving, <21>, <23>
Music, 32
Nature, <35>, <43>
Neighborhood, 21, 38, 39, <41>
Outings, 35
Parties, 16
Pen Pals, 17, 39
Photographs, 17, 21, 41
Picture Book Summary, 7–8
Referrals, 23-24
Responding to Moving, 12–13
School
activities, 16–17, 37–39
Scrapbook, 17, 21, 38
Shyness, 30, <32>
Sleeping, 27
Stress, 29
Support Groups, 57–58
Talking
activities, 10–11, 13, <33>, <38>, 46-49
Visiting, <17>, <19>
Withdrawal
activities, 28–30
Writing, 19, 21, 23, 32, 41, 46-47

For a complete catalog of titles in the
KIDS HAVE FEELINGS TOO series, write:

Fearon Teacher Aids
299 Jefferson Road
P.O. Box 480
Parsippany, NJ 07054-0480

ISBN 1-56417-673-8